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ABSTRACT

This article presents gender perspectives on the formation of the preschool teacher and the formation of a domain for education and child rearing of young children, commenting on the designation of the professional field of education as "female territory." The report uses the results from two Swedish studies: the first dealing with the period from 1900-1945 and the development of the new profession for caring and education along with its significance as a starting point for redistribution of responsibility for child care; the follow-up study on 1945-1972, a period in Swedish preschool history characterized by the integration of the field into state and municipal structures and by resistance toward the development of a professional domain for early childhood education. Methods used in the studies were quantitative and qualitative textual analysis of the Swedish magazine, "Kindergarten (The Pre-School)," official reports and legislation, interviews, and archival materials. The article addresses political implications for child care and early childhood education, asserting that the development of the preschool field shows the relationship between men and women as more important in deciding roles and behaviors than the gender definition itself. Other issues discussed include the societal and spiritual mother models, sex segregation, patriarchal ideas, paternal protection, and Froebelian theories. Contains 49 references. (BGC)

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GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE FORMATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD FOR CARING AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Ingegerd Tallberg Broman

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GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE FORMATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD FOR CARING AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Ingegerd Tallberg Broman

Tallberg Broman, I. Gender perspectives on the formation of the professional field for the caring and education of children. *Reprints and Miniprints* (Malmö, Sweden: School of Education), No. 826, 1994.

In this article gender perspectives on the formation of the pre-school teacher and on the formation of a domain for education and upbringing of younger children are brought into focus.

The professional field was designated as female territory. What were the implications of this for the development of the profession and the domain? What are the implications of the fact that a good quality public education and caring of children is a precondition for equality?

The presentation is based on the results of two studies which have dealt with the periods 1900-1945 and 1945-1972 in Swedish pre-school history. Theories of gender and professionalization have provided valuable ways for understanding the data.

Gender perspectives on the formation of the professional field for caring and education of children

In this article gender perspectives on the formation of *the pre-school teacher*, and on the formation of a *domain for education and upbringing of younger children* will be brought into focus.

Questions to be discussed

> How and why was the profession for the caring and education of younger children formed? By which groups?
>
> The field was designated as female territory. What were the implications of this for the development of the profession and the domain?
>
> What are the implications of the fact that a good quality public educare is a precondition for equality?

The presentation is based on the results of two studies. My thesis (Tallberg Broman, 1991) dealt with the period from 1900 - 1945 with a focus on the development of this new profession for caring and education, its precondition and its signification of being a starting point for an extensive redistribution of responsibility for children. A follow-up study, recently finished (Tallberg-Broman, 1994) focused on the professional's description of the period from 1945 - 1972, a period in Swedish pre-school history that can be characterised by the integration of the field to state and municipal structures and organisations and by an obvious resistance towards the project of developing a professional domain for education and upbringing of younger children.

Methods

Text analysis, quantitative and qualitative, of the Swedish magazine "Kindergarten" (The Pre-school)

Analysis of official reports and legislation
Interviews
Analysis of different archive material, especially correspondence

Theories

Theories of gender and professionalization have provided valuable ways for understanding the data.

The formation of a professional field for the caring and education of younger children

How, when, why and by whom?
I will start with a historical review. The development of Swedish society during the 19th century led to a radically changed situation for the family. Industrialisation and urbanisation implied new conditions for reproductive work – for the caring of children, old and sick people. The upbringing of children through participation in a working partnership normally took place relatively early in each household, within the context of a traditional, religious-based structure. Urbanisation partly destroyed this framework and also initiated a number of separation processes which were to have a great impact on the conditions of the children's upbringing.

Under the new circumstances, work and the home/household were separated, this being especially distinct in the work of males. Men, women and children found themselves in different working and living conditions. Women and men even became competitors in some fields of work, their individual contributions no longer forming necessary parts in a totality, or aspects of mutual production. The men found a clear position in working life – they belonged to the outer sphere, the social.

For many women, however, their role in production was unclear. The woman belonged, first of all, to the home, and it was preferable that her work should be placed there. But, in the new situation, economic circumstances demanded that she must also seek other solutions.

Possibilities for female labour were being constructed, especially for the working class woman. Female jobs were also created, especially for the daughters of the middle classes. Among such tasks was work concerned with reproduction; for example, the caring for and education of children. Here, jobs and professions were formed which both attempted to gradually fill the emptiness created by the new societal structure as well as to develop and structure those reproductive duties with new meaning and goals. Thus, the job of kindergarten teacher was formed. It symbolises the beginning of society's take-over of the reproductive functions of the home, which has been carried out – and structured – during the 20th century.

Table 1. The development of institutions for early childhood caring and education in Sweden from 1937-1992 (until 1965 the number of places is shown, from 1970 the number of children registered)

Year	Day Nursery (A)	Fam. Day Care (B)	A+B % Children of all	Part time pre-school
1937	3 530 (*)			3 704(**)
1950	9 708	-	1.1 %	18 743
1955	10 015	-	1.3 %	27 769
1960	10 270	3 692	1.9 %	38 373
1965	11 715	11 717	3.0 %	47 050
1970	34 890	36 593	8.7 %	73 510
1975	65 962	49 811	15.1%	112 030
1980	129 101	90 156	31.3 %	104 702
1985	184 392	113 466	44.6 %	78 025
1990	256 349	110 356	48.0 %	63 111
1992	306 869	99 855	49.8 %	60 893

Source: SCB + SOU 1938:20

*
3 530 corresponds to the number of children with full-time attendance at the crèche (1 748), kindergartens (110), schools for small children (406), working cottage (639), child welfare station (157) and in mixed forms (470 st).

**
3 704 corresponds to the number of children with part-time attendance (part-time) at the crèche (173), kindergarten (1 425) schools for small children (621), working cottages (895) child well fare stations (73) and in mixed forms (517).

The dominant gender ideology which permeated society at the time of the formation of the kindergartener, the pre-school teacher, determined a woman's predisposition for her home and children. There was also a growing, mostly liberal, *belief in the possibilities of education*. By educating the children, "the people", it would be possible to change society and form a better and more harmonious future. The kindergarten movement grew in this context.

The pioneers were not opposed to the ideology of a basic inequality of gender; instead *they used its concepts for their own purposes:* to format an appropriate profession for women and an educational environment for children. They agreed with the woman's disposition for home and children, but saw that it could be applied *to an extended concept* of home and children. The kindergarten should be like a home, and the kindergarten teachers were spiritual housewives and mothers.

The gender ideology concerning the bourgeois women in the late 19th century prescribed passivity in the outer world (Lundbergh, 1986). To be of service to others, to be "good", graceful, listening and unselfish were female virtues that also can be found mentioned as appropriate characteristics of a professional kindergarten teacher. "Äusserlich passiv und innerlich aktive" was the directing advice from the German founder of the Pestalozzi-Fröbel Haus, Henriette Schrader Breyman. By stressing those characteristics of an appropriate kindergarten teacher, a pre-school teacher, *a closing mechanism*, socially and gender-wise, was constructed.

But for the appropriate women an acceptable world for both inside and outside activity was created.

A social territory with female governors

A social territory (Donzelot, 1980; Ohrlander, 1992) between home and society was formed. The model home had *a societal mother* (Amjörnsson, 1974; Key, 1914) *or spiritual mother* (Taylor Allen, 1982; Johansson, 1983; Morgenstern, 1867) as its leader. The institutions were often named "home", with different kinds of prefix.

In this field a lot of female activities, later on professions started (Florin, 1987; Hedström Huveröd, 1989; Åström, 1986). Many of those corresponded to a woman's role and function in the home, in the household. You find *mothers*, spiritual or social, like teachers; you find *sisters* - like nurses; you find the *daughters*, as assistants in the caring of different kinds of people, for example the elderly (Holm, 1993). In the first decades of the Swedish kindergarten history, the staff members were called *"aunt"*.

The women had special tasks in the society that "only could be solved by women" said the Danish pioneers the two Wulff sisters (Wulff & Wulff, 1931). The women used their field - they widened it to a half-public field and formed tasks appropriate for women, and just for women.

This fact of *sex segregation* is a clear trait in the formation of the labour market and also in the field of training schools and education. This pattern has many explanations. First, the moral motive was obvious in the late 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. If the daughters should be allowed to live a life in "the outside" world, it had to be in a sex segregated world. In the training schools for pre-school teachers, of course only for girls, (until 1965 only two boys had been educated as pre-school teachers in Sweden) the head mistress had a responsibility not only for her girls' development of knowledge, but especially for their moral development and for their behaviour.

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In this territory, in this field, the women could be very active. They did not oppose the dominant societal ideology which concerned women and their place in society, but in their sex segregated fields different values, ethics and rules could be developed. Here they could be very active. Here female activity, initiative and power was accepted. Many examples of powerful headmistresses for training schools, child institutions, nursing homes etc., have been described.

The *paternal protection* in the pre-school field, was the *Froebelian doctrine, the Froebelian language and methods and F. W. Fröbel himself.* He was an often quoted man and his words and portraits were put up on the ceilings in the child institutions. His spirit followed and supported the formation of a social and pedagogical field outside the home. He offered protection and direction, but the active co-structors were the women seriously engaged "for the sake of the child".

Fröbel emphasised the special gift of women for education. By using the gift and "the educational calling" the kindergarten movement constructed magazines, training schools, a new profession for caring and education, and different kinds of institutions for children and for guidance and education of their mothers in many parts of the world (Alander & Eklund, 1923; Cavallo, 1976; Dale Ross, 1976; Hultquist, 1990; Korsvold, 1990; Johansson, 1992; Shapiro, 1983; Spodek, 1988; Peabody, 1877; Tallberg Broman, 1991; Taylor Allen, 1982).

The education and caring of younger children and the professional training of girls was strictly a family matter and not a question for the state

This field was until the 1930.s a domain outside the state and municipal authorities, organisations, structures and economy. The first Swedish state investigation that was concerned with child care and education took place in 1938 (SOU 1938:20). As late as 1944 the very first state support was given to the institutions. The resistance in the dominant ideology against state support had an important and very interesting foundation in the fact that the control of upbringing, education and concern of the younger children was seen as *the family's / the father's right and responsibility.* By financing the child institutions, the state had to control and inspect the

institutions, thereby diminishing the families, the father's own rights and the family patriarchal power.

From that time on more and more decisions that formerly lay in the hands of the household, the family and the father were transferred and taken over by the state and municipal authorities. This development during the 20th century can be described as a change *from a family patriarchy to a state patriarchy*. The individual father lost influence and power over the family situation and the upbringing and education of his children. The personal influence over childhood and adolescence diminished (Holm, 1993; Kyle, 1985, Lasch, 1977) .

The family's responsibility for caring and educating applied to all children. When school became compulsory in the 19th century in Sweden, many families showed resistance against this intervention in their own rights and duties, and consequently they kept their children at home (Sideback, 1992). But the transformation of the responsibility for caring and education of children and youth was continued and a characteristic of the 20th century is an extensive *redistribution of the responsibility* for children and youth between family (household, relatives) and the state and municipality.

The *training of the girls*, their schooling and education was the thing that for the longest time was seen as a matter for the family and for the father to decide, control and pay for. State support to different schools for girls was not really a task for the state economy (Florin & Johansson, 1993; Kilander, 1991; Sommestad, 1992).

As for Swedish conditions, the training schools for pre-school teachers came under state authority and financial support as late as 1966. State support had then been requested for more than 30 years. The budget for a pupil was put very low in comparison with the budget for other kinds of teacher training, a fact that is still a reality.

1967/1968

the pupil budget/year was:

10 300 SEK for Training college for elementary-school teachers'.
6 300 SEK for Handicraft training school
4 100 SEK for Training school for pre-school teacher
(Strömberg Lind, 1968).

1985/ 86

27 300 SEK for the teacher college for pre-school teachers
45 362 SEK for the teacher college for junior level teachers
41 512 SEK for the teacher college for senior level teachers

1992/93

33 908 SEK for the teacher college for pre-school teachers
46 882 SEK for the teacher college for the compulsory school
(VHS statistics).

(Figures not adjusted to account for inflation)

The territory integrates with the welfare state

The middle of the 1940.s marks the beginning of the process of integration of the different kinds of institutions for the caring and education of younger children and the associated training schools of the professionals to the state and municipal organisations and economy.

Table 2. Municipalisation 1941 - 1970

Year	Municipalised institutions
1941	7 %
1945	22 %
1950	36 %
1961	65 %
1970	96 %

Source: Johansson & Åstedt, 1993, s 52

Lisa Berner, a leader of the Training School for Teachers in Early Child Education in Gothenburg, Sweden, commented the changes like this 1946:

"The whole business is being transformed. Until now it has been a matter for associations and separate individuals, now it is being Municipalised and nationalised. ...Sometimes I wonder if we really understand what is happening in our work. We can't work alone and divided any more. Everywhere the interest for pre-school work is growing. The dream that the society should take on part of the responsibility of the upbringing of the pre-school children, as for the school-aged children, is being realised. Of course we are all happy over such a development and look to the future with confidence. But with this, responsibility also follows. Society' s intervention must be both positive and negative. We will not be as independent as we have been to arrange our institutions and organise our work...doctors, employees in child welfare and even political authorities will have a say in the organisation of the kindergartens".

A values and language conflict between the professionals and the male state and municipal representatives is apparent. Conflicts related to different perspectives in the female culture and in the male dominated organisations and decision systems are obvious (Hatje, 1992; Tallberg Broman, 1994))

Different language, different ethics and value orientation is apparent. An ethic based on caring and responsibility, with a great amount of flexibility (Halsaa, 1988; Waerness, 1984; Ve, 1987), which was developed in relation to the individual child, the individual family, was established in contrast to an ethic based on principles, rights and duties (Gilligan, 1982). Forms, blanks, schedules, measurement systems were now presented to the former, rather free enterprises. Different kinds of rationality, different ways of thinking, can be described, with examples from this phase of integration.

The female pedagogical project was changed and adjusted to the dominant male societal project at that time. The goals that governed the pioneers were now subordinated. The pedagogical questions, the wish to reform the growing conditions and the work "for the sake of the children" were not the important questions.

Institutions for caring and education as a political strategy

The political planning of the new society, the "folk-home", the welfare state in Sweden did not take the planning of organising the reproductive functions under any serious consideration. This has been pointed out as a part of the female discrimination during this period (Liljeström, 1979). Those institutions that existed in the child care and education field were presented by the state investigators and politicians as follows:

A population question (SOU 1938: 20)
The institutions were first discussed as strategies for improving the very low birth rate in the 1930.s in Sweden. The will to give birth should be encouraged with different kinds of support to the families.

A labour market question
The institutions were presented in terms of strategies that regulated the amount of women at the labour market (Kyle, 1979). State support, the very first, was now given to institutions in those places where you could prove a need for female employment (1944). The child caring institutions were intended for those children, who had mothers who had to work.

The institutions *were not planned* as something needed and valuable for every growing child. They *were not planned* as a needed and valuable instrument for the female partnership in the new society. Those ways of looking at the child institutions belong for the first, to the professionals, to the kindergarten movement, and for the second to the women's movement and the professional women's standpoints.

The labour market perspective on institutions for early childhood education and caring has been, and still is, complicated and sometimes contradictory to goals of quality for the children.

The dominant societal ideology in the 1940.s, 1950.s and in the beginning of the1960.s prescribed a female role that was oriented towards home and children and husband. The world was divided by gender into two - a female home-centred sphere and a male sphere in the outside world- in work, in different organisations, movements, clubs, hobbies etc., outside the home. To offer institutions that made it possible for women to enter

this outside world and to make their own living and their own world, out of sight and control, was not in line with deeply rooted values and beliefs. It was acceptable to support institutions to help women who had children but no husband, but for those with both children and a husband it was seen as an unnecessary and very poor idea.

Through those perspectives held by the state and municipal authorities etc., *the child caring system was strictly divided into two parts.* That was not in any way in agreement with the professionals. One system was directed to the children of working mothers - nearly half of the users were single women (Johansson, 1993). The other was directed to children in general, and offered a 3 hour attendance, justified by pedagogical and social goals. Those two systems were held apart until the 1970.s (see Table 1). In the 1970.s the domain was adjusted to the great social themes at that time - now *equality*.

A question of equality

Equality was a highly ranked political question on the program for the governing social-democratic party. A state investigation presented the child care and education system in a rather new way (SOU 1972:26). The roots to a formerly disliked system of day nurseries for poor children, for single women, and a part-time system for more privileged were for the moment cut off. *This instrument for equality* had to be something different from the old kinds of institutions to be an acceptable way of organising the upbringing and education of the younger children.

With the aforementioned political legitimation, coupled with a rapidly growing participation of women in the employment market the system became immensely extended (compare with Table 1). The women were, as can be seen in Table 3, already in the labour market and were having great problems in organising their child care.

Table 3. Employment 1963-1993

Year	Men	Women	Women with children under age 7
1963	89.9	54.5	38.0
1968	88.0	56.4	42.1
1970	87.0	59.3	49.7
1975	88.3	67.9	60.5
1980	87.7	75.0	75.2
1985	86.0	79.2	84.0
1990	86.3	81.9	86.0
1993	80.9	77.2	81.3

Source: SCB

The child care and education systems were presented as an important tool for two kinds of equality - equality between different groups of children and equality between men and women. Every child should have equal opportunities and the day care and education systems should compensate and complete the child's growing conditions. Every adult should have the possibility to earn a living, no matter if they were women or men. The development can also be described in terms of the 20th century's process of civilisation and individualisation (Hultquist, 1990).

A question of family support and societal service
During the last decades, the child care and education system has developed to a huge *family support and societal service* (Andersson, 1985) which has in the last years been placed under critical evaluation and limitations.

Consequences for the female professionals

When the female pedagogical project was integrated with the state and the municipal field it changed character in many aspects. The female leaders lost their great influence over the domain. The training schools, which during the first decades were the ones that controlled and structured the domain, lost their power to the state and the municipal authorities, investigations and organisations.

When the domain was outside and segregated from the more public area, the women had all the roles and functions in this hierarchically structured area. Very prominent women can be described from this period; very active women with initiative, control and power. Integrated in the public male world, they became more silent. They were given and took quite different functions, at least for many years.

A sex-segregated domain allows other roles for men and women than a sex-integrated domain. The relationship between men and women, and the way it is structured and defined in a society, plays an important role in deciding which roles men and women can assume in a sex-integrated context. This study of the development of the pre-school field shows that the *relationship between men and women* is more important in deciding roles, behaviours and possibilities than the gender definition in itself. The two principles for organisation pointed out by the historian Hirdman (1988), *segregation and hierarchy*, with the male as a norm, can be illustrated. This example shows that when - from these historical conditions - a sex segregated working area is integrated in a mixed field, it has negative consequences for the female initiative and power and for the women's possibility to mark the goals, the understanding and evaluation of the area.

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The diminishing influence can also be compared with a pattern that shows that women in general seems to have had more possibilities and more influence in the initial phase in organisations, professions and ways of production, than they have, when the organisation, the profession and the ways of producing are established and institutionalised (Göransson, 1987; Florin, 1987).

Holm (1993) has pointed out that even if most of the female working culture today is under societal management in Sweden, the women do not take part in the public discussion or influence politics or science to some important or corresponding degree.

The goal of equality is not in everyone's heart

A well developed system for child care and education means an important precondition for an extensive change between men and women, between the father and the mother. A system for child care and education makes it possible for women to live a kind of equal life. That fact has been a deep source for needing to control and limit the growth of the systems during their history.

When the Swedish society changed as a result of the industrial revolution during the 19th and 20th centuries, upbringing and education were set in focus. The old structures and societal control mechanisms were dissolved. There was a great need for a new institution to control and integrate the youngsters. The public school system was developed with an important social integrating and controlling function (Sandin, 1977).

The question discussed here can be summarised as follows:
Why was there a political interest to develop the school, but a real disinterest and a really strong negative attitude until the 1970's in Sweden, to develop the pre-school?

One part of the answer is that the possible positive consequences of the pre-school, the qualities, have not really been understood and evaluated by the super culture, by the dominating authorities. Differences in experiences, thinking, value-orientation and language between the caring

and educating female working cultures and the decision-makers' culture represent a very difficult problem.

Another part of the answer is that the pre-school has an emancipatory function for women, that for a long time has not been in line with the dominant societal ideology. The development of a high quality system of early childhood education in a combined day care system, offered an important precondition for a profound change between men and women, and of the relationship between men and women. That has been, and still is, an important fact that influences the child care policy.

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